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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL U.S.A. CALLS ON GENERAL VIOLA TO ACCOUNT FOR WHEREABOUTS OF
MEN ABDUCTED ON EVE OF HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON

Amnesty International U.S.A. today (March 16, 1981) called on Argentine President-designate, General Roberto Viola, to clarify the whereabouts and guarantee the safety of two men abducted in Argentina on the eve of his visit to Washington, the latest of thousands of Argentine men, women and children to "disappear" since the military took power in 1976.

General Viola, scheduled to become President of Argentina on March 29, is in Washington for meetings with President Reagan and congressional leaders.

Amnesty International has learned that on March 11, armed men in civilian clothing entered the home of Jorge Magrino, a factory worker in the province of Buenos Aires, placed a hood on his head and took him away. On March 12 the home of Mr. Magrino's mother-in-law was entered and searched. On March 13, armed men abducted Hector Orlando Piñon, a tannery worker in the same province, after failing to find his brother at home. Police have refused to register complaints by the families who witnessed the abductions.

Amnesty International U.S.A. said these disappearances were only the latest in a series of repressive acts during recent weeks. On February 27, six human rights leaders were arrested following a raid on the offices of a human rights organization in Buenos Aires (Center for Social and Legal Studies). The six were held for a week before being released for lack of sufficient evidence and are still facing charges.

On March 12, security forces detained more than 45 of 200 Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo who were protesting the disappearances of their children and grandchildren. The Mothers were held for several hours before being released. In a cable to General Viola, Amnesty International U.S.A. renewed the call for an accounting of all the men, women and children who have disappeared in Argentina, estimated by the Organization of American States as between 5,000 and 20,000 since 1975, and the release of 900 persons being held without charges or whose sentences have already been served. Amnesty International U.S.A. also appealed for a review by a general civilian court of all cases of prisoners sentenced by military courts and a fair trial for all persons who have been charged.